

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS SUBJECT TRACKING AND
REPORTING SYSTEM (DOCSTARS)**

Bismarck, North Dakota

INFORMATION SYSTEM AUDIT

For the period January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003

Client Code 2900

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER

May 25, 2004

Honorable John Hoeven, Governor
Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly
Elaine Little, Director

Transmitted herewith is the information system audit of the Department of Corrections Subject Tracking and Reporting System (DOCSTARS) for the period January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003. This audit resulted from the statutory responsibility of the State Auditor under NDCC section 54-10-01.

DOCSTARS is used to maintain records relating to offenders managed by the Field Services Division of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

DOCSTARS was selected for this audit because it is considered a high-risk information system for the state of North Dakota, according to the "State Information Technology Systems Risk Assessment" of all state computer systems, issued by the Office of the State Auditor on May 15, 2002. Risk was evaluated based on several factors, including, but not limited to, size and complexity of the system, sensitivity of the data, and regulatory requirements. "High-risk" does not necessarily indicate problems with the system, but indicates a higher potential for significant problems to occur.

Inquiries or comments relating to this audit may be directed to Donald LaFleur, Information Systems Audit Manager, by calling (701) 328-4744. We wish to express our appreciation to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for the courtesy, cooperation, and assistance provided to us during this audit.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert R. Peterson
State Auditor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide our analysis, findings, and recommendations regarding our audit of the Department of Corrections Subject Tracking and Reporting System (DOCSTARS). This audit was primarily an information system audit; however, we also addressed operational issues related to the system and its operation within the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

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Our audit resulted in the following significant findings:

- Excess user accounts
- Inadequate edit checks
- Lack of integration between Field Services and institutional systems

The finding concerning integration had also been made in the report on the Study of the Facilities and Operations of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation issued June 15, 2002 by Security Response Technologies, Inc.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

System Overview

The North Dakota State Parole Department commenced its computerization of its manual record system in 1987. The Parole Department secured the services of the now known Information Technology Department to write a dBaseIII program. In 1989, the Parole Department merged with the newly created DOCR and became known as the Field Services Division of DOCR. In 1994, the Field Services Division expanded its automation to include 4 regional offices. Information was transmitted via floppy disk between the central office's server and the external offices. In 1996, Field Services expanded its automation effort to every district office, of which there are currently 14. From late 1997 to July 1998, the Field Services Division utilized the services of DOCR's only IT staff person to convert the DOS based database into a windows program. They also converted to a wide area network (WAN) approach utilizing one server in Bismarck. The application has undergone several upgrades to meet the demands of the Field Services Division.

DOCSTARS currently provides the Division with a variety of information. All offenders assigned to the Division are entered into DOCSTARS. Demographic information is obtained from them which will be used in a number of reports. Legal case information is included to indicate the reason why the offender is under Division supervision. The offender's objective risk score information is stored and from the results of the risk assessment, the staff develops an individualized supervision plan. This supervision plan is also stored within DOCSTARS.

One of the most used functions of the program is Chronos, the chronological portion of the program. Also, DOCSTARS contains the accounting program for supervision fees and community corrections programming fees. Both the charges and receipts are contained in DOCSTARS.

DOCSTARS contains a number of hard coded reports that all staff can run. These reports contain information on their active offenders list, discharges pending, reassessments due, and a delinquency list of fees owed to the Division.

Financial Information

Included below is a statement of activity for accounts receivable tracked on DOCSTARS.

DOCSTARS ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE ACTIVITY	
	1/1/2003- 12/31/2003
Charges	
Supervision Fees	\$1,317,268
Pre-sentence Investigation Fees	25,130
Correctional Program Fees	26,291
Interstate Compact Application Transfer Fee	25,200
Travel Permit Fees	11,370
Total Charges	\$1,405,259
Credits	
Payments	\$ 850,127
Court Waiver of Payments	36,943
Community Service Credits	81,141
Incarceration Credits	60,097
Other Credits and Waivers	34,556
Write-off of Uncollectible Accounts	270,468
Total Credits	\$1,333,332

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this audit of DOCSTARS for the period January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003 was to answer the following questions:

1. Are security controls surrounding the system adequate?
2. Are the archive and reactivation functions working properly?
3. Does DOCSTARS contain necessary edit checks?
4. Is data sent to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation complete and accurate?
5. Are there proper controls surrounding accounts receivable?
6. Is data shared between DOCSTARS and ITAG?

This audit was conducted in accordance with *Standards for Information Systems Auditing* issued by the Information Systems Audit and Control Association and *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

ARE SECURITY CONTROLS SURROUNDING THE SYSTEM ADEQUATE?

Summary of Audit Work Performed

Security controls are necessary to safeguard information against unauthorized use, disclosure, modification, damage, or loss. Proper security controls ensure that access to systems, data, and programs is restricted to authorized users.

We reviewed the security mechanisms used to control access to the system. We also performed a review of user accounts and access rights for the system. When further restricted by the screen or function, we reviewed program coding to ensure access was appropriate.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, other than noted in our finding below, security controls for DOCSTARS are adequate.

Audit Findings

Excess user accounts

We noted multiple user accounts that were not for active employees. We also noted 9 user accounts that did not have passwords associated with them. Management should establish procedures to ensure timely action relating to the closing of user accounts. Passwords should be required. Keeping user accounts active for terminated employees and accounts without passwords creates a risk of unauthorized access.

Recommendation:

We recommend the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation perform an annual review of all user accounts to verify that access is appropriate and ensure timely action relating to suspending and closing user accounts.

Agency Response:

The agency will conduct quarterly audits on DOCSTARS security accounts and delete accounts that are no longer required.

ARE THE ARCHIVE AND REACTIVATION FUNCTIONS WORKING PROPERLY?

Summary of Audit Work Performed

To increase responsiveness of the DOCSTARS application, DOCR archives data for offenders who have been off parole or probation for 120 days and do not have an accounts receivable balance. For repeat offenders whose records have been archived, certain information is restored into the production database from the archives.

We reviewed the criteria used by the Department for archiving records and reactivating those records. We also reviewed program coding for the process to ensure that it was following the established criteria.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, the procedures for archiving and reactivating records in DOCSTARS are adequate.

DOES DOCSTARS CONTAIN NECESSARY EDIT CHECKS?

Summary of Audit Work Performed

We used computer assisted audit techniques to analyze DOCSTARS data for validity and consistency. We also reviewed the design and coding for tables and screens to determine if proper edit checks were in place.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, DOCSTARS does not contain necessary edit checks.

Audit Finding

Inadequate edit checks

DOCSTARS edit checks are not adequate to ensure all data is accurate, valid, and complete. Missing edit checks of significance were no edit checks for date fields and no edit checks in the system editor, the utility used by administrative staff to edit data. We noted invalid dates in multiple fields within DOCSTARS. Edit checks are necessary to ensure that data entered is accurate, valid, and complete.

Recommendation:

We recommend the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation incorporate sufficient edit checks in DOCSTARS.

Agency Response:

The agency will review the date edit check process in DOCSTARS and implement new edit check functionality in future upgrades as per audit findings.

IS DATA SENT TO THE BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION COMPLETE AND ACCURATE?

Summary of Audit Work Performed

Data from DOCSTARS is electronically transferred to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). This data is queried whenever the Highway Patrol performs a background check on a driver who has been stopped. Parole and probation officers are then notified via e-mail if an offender assigned to them has been stopped.

We reviewed the coding used to transfer data on active offenders from DOCSTARS to BCI. We also obtained a copy of the files transferred to BCI to ensure all information is completely and accurately transferred.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, data sent to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation is complete and accurate.

ARE THERE PROPER CONTROLS SURROUNDING ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE?

Summary of Audit Work Performed

We reviewed the manual and computer procedures for charging fees, collecting payments, and crediting payments and non-cash credits to accounts receivable.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, there are proper controls surrounding the accounting for receivables.

IS DATA SHARED BETWEEN DOCSTARS AND ITAG?

Summary of Audit Work Performed

We reviewed the report on the Study of the Facilities and Operations of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation issued June 15, 2002 by Security Response Technologies, Inc. This report commented on the “need to link communication of information between the institutional system, ITAG, and the Field Services system, DOCSTARS.”

We interviewed the client to determine the procedures or interfaces in place to share data between DOCSTARS and ITAG. We did not note any procedures in place.

Auditor’s Opinion

In our opinion, there are no procedures in place to enable data sharing between DOCSTARS and ITAG.

Audit Finding

Lack of integration between Field Services and institutional systems

There are no procedures or interfaces in place to share data between DOCSTARS and ITAG. This results in inefficiencies with entering data twice and an increased risk of errors occurring in data entry. Although there is a module that ties together with ITAG, DOCR had chosen not to purchase it because of its cost and lack of funding.

Recommendation:

We recommend the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation integrate its Field Services system and its institutional offender system.

Agency Response:

This has always been a goal of the DOCR, but due to a historic lack of funding we were unable to procure a unified system that will fit agency operations. Future plans for DOCSTARS includes a re-write of the product into a full web-based application using a more secure database product. The new product will incorporate the sharing of data with ITAG as required. The Auditor’s Office will be consulted during the analysis phase of the re-write to insure all security and legal issues have been identified before coding begins. The value of total integration between field services and the institution is yet to be studied.